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WORKING HINTS FOR LOCAL UNIONS — OF — THE UNITED FARM WOMEN OF ALBERTA



HISTORY OF ORGANIZATION.

Our farm women's organization grew primarily out of a pronounced need for some form of social intercourse. The monotony and isolation of farm life, with its consequent restricted opportunities for recreation, development or service, was the despair of many a thinking woman. How was she to retain the advantages which the life on the land offers—the privacy, the simplicity, the joy and restfulness of the life lived close to nature—and at the same time effectively assist social movements for the betterment of community and national life? As an individual she could accomplish little; she must become part of an organization, but what?

Wide-awake women realized that back of their special problems—the efficient management of the home and the training and care of children—lay the economic problem, labor-saving devices, conservation of health, better rural schools and higher education were directly connected with better markets, co-operative buying and selling, and better agricultural credit. In other words, the farmer's problem was his wife's problem also. What could be more logical than for her to assist the farmers' movement? And that is exactly what happened.

Early Development.

In the year 1913 provision was first made in the Constitution of the United Farmers of Alberta for the admission of women to the Association with the same standing as men. Numerous farm women took advantage of the opportunity thus afforded them to take part in public affairs and in the economic problems confronting the farmer. In 1914 a number met in annual convention with the men. During that year there was a considerable increase in the women's membership, but it was felt that there were so many problems which came more directly within the province of the women to be solved, that membership in the men's organization was not sufficient, and that the women really needed an organization of their own.

In 1915 a large number of women were present when the U.F.A. Convention assembled, and at that time arrangements were made for them to meet separately. The result was that they decided to form a Women's Auxiliary to the U.F.A., and accordingly appointed their own officers. At the end of the year twenty-three locals had been formed with a membership of about 500. In 1916 the Women's Auxiliary was officially recognized by the United Farmers of Alberta and it was decided at the annual convention to organize as a provincial association to be known as the United Farm Women of Alberta, under the same Constitution as the U.F.A.

In 1917 this Constitution was amended at annual convention to give a definite place in the organization to the women's section, known as the United Farm Women of Alberta. These amendments gave the President of the U.F.W.A. a place on the U.F.A. Executive and the Executive of the U.F.W.A. a place on the Board of the U.F.A. By this means the two sections were brought into the closest co-operation to the advantage of the whole Organization.

Steady Growth.

The membership of the locals and the number of locals is steadily growing year by year, and the organization has received a considerable amount of recognition from public bodies in other provinces as well as our own. It is looked to as a strong, independent body of women voters, with a larger body of organized farmers to support its sane and just demands for public betterment. The locals have from the time of their formation done good work in a large variety of ways.

In many places Junior Branches have been formed, rest rooms in the nearby town or village have been established, school field days have been inaugurated and work for community betterment much stimulated in every way. Debates, study and discussion at meetings have aroused interest in such things as medical inspection of schools, nursing, medical aid, social service, greater production, egg circles, gardening, and a variety of other subjects which cannot fail to have an effect in stimulating and benefitting the life of the country.

The farm women's organization is as yet in the early stages of development, but it has its roots deep in the soil, and we look to the years ahead for great achievements.

A FEW PRACTICAL ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE U.F.W.A.

1. Secured Obstetrical Nurses to supplement the efforts of the medical profession in outlying districts.
2. Been responsible for getting legislation enacted instituting Municipal Hospitals.
3. Increased the interest and support given to Public Health Nurses.
4. Been instrumental in securing reform of the Dower, Mothers' Allowances and other Acts.

5. Organized Junior Branches for the purpose of training farm boys and girls in citizenship, and of interesting them in the improvement of rural conditions, so they will find farm life attractive and profitable.

6. Placed Rest Rooms in the towns and cities for the use of country women, secured permanent and travelling libraries, held School Field Days and School Fairs to further the interest of the boys and girls in the school, also furnished equipment for the playground and the Hot Noon Lunch, and helped to improve the appearance of school and grounds. Co-operated with the University of Alberta in arranging the Annual Conference for Young Farm People at the University, South Edmonton.

7. Our locals have been the means of bringing about a more neighborly spirit in their communities, a more satisfying social life, thus relieving farm life of much of its isolation.

8. The U.F.W.A. has provided an organization in which farm women can train themselves to take their proper place in the conduct of their country's affairs. This is evidenced more plainly at each succeeding Convention—it has given training in methods of conducting business; knowledge of our public institutions and of Government; and has developed confidence and ability to express their ideas in debate.

Aims of the U.F.W.A.

To widen the influence of the Farmers' Movement by enrolling the active help of all enfranchised farm women.

To obtain future leaders for the Organization by enlisting the sympathies and stimulating the interest of the rural boys and girls by the formation of Junior Branches.

The improvement of rural schools, through organized effort and co-operation between the community and the teacher.

The improvement of legislation affecting women and children.

Better provision for the medical care of the rural districts, and more adequate machinery for the safeguarding of Public Health and Child Welfare.

Education of women and young people in the duties and responsibilities of citizenship.

Community betterment through study, discussion and co-operative effort.

The raising of the standard of home, of community and of national life.

Co-operation with all forces, moral or material, which are working for the greatest good of the country and its people.

Reasons Why Farm Women Should Belong to the U.F.W.A.

1. For the purpose of strengthening the Farmers' Movement. Increased membership means increased power with which to fight the farmers' battles.

2. Because farm women, having now the franchise, it is a matter of vital importance to the success of the Farmers' Movement that this large body of voters should be inside the organization.

3. Because the farmer's problems are equally the problems of the farmer's wife, and the better social and economic conditions, for the purpose of achieving which the farmer is today mobilizing his forces throughout the Dominion, will benefit his family even more than himself.

4. Because the moral and social problems of the rural districts cannot be solved without the aid and sympathy of the organized rural women. The individual worker can achieve nothing.

5. Because the result of belonging to such an organization as the U.F.A. has a three-fold benefit:

(a) It is a benefit to the farm woman herself, through bringing her into greater social intercourse with the men and women of the farmers'

organization, by the stimulating effect on her mentality through the contact of mind with mind at the monthly meetings, by the enlargement of her life and outlook through taking part, even though in a limited way, with public movements.

(b) It is a benefit to the community because of awakened interest in community conditions, and the possibility by organized efforts to improve those conditions.

(c) It is a benefit to the larger life of the nation through the fact that any stimulation of mental activity brings increased interest in public affairs, and any co-operative effort towards betterment of social, economic and moral conditions, with its cumulative effect on public opinion, must tend to a reaching out for a higher standard of home, of community, and of national life.

6. Because whatever may be said to the contrary, and however specious the language in which it may be said, it is a fact patent to all clear and unprejudiced thinkers, that no other organization can accomplish for the farm women the final benefits that can be attained by working as part of the great body of mobilized farm people.

PLAN OF WORK

The following lines of activity may be taken as a broad basis of study and work for The United Farm Women of Alberta:

Health Matters.

Our New Canadians.

Young Peoples' Work.

Citizenship.

Rural Education.

Service for Others.

Any one of these subjects might well engross all our activities for a considerable period; however, before we can throw our full weight as good citizens into the civic scale we need a wide understanding of

many matters of vital importance to ourselves, our children and the nation at large.

Health

This is a subject of paramount importance, considering that health is an invaluable possession which should be ours, and in view of the fact that in epidemics medical facilities in rural districts proved totally inadequate.

Put in your program such subjects as:

General Care of the Health.

Municipal Hospitals.

Rural Sanitation.

Tuberculosis and Its Prevention.

Medical Inspection of Schools by Public Health Nurses.

Home Nursing and First Aid.

Child Welfare and Mothercraft.

Hold baby clinics or a Baby Welfare Day periodically.

How Alberta Cares for Delinquent and Dependent Children and Mental Defectives

Red Cross Work in Times of Peace.

Try to secure the help of the nearest doctor or trained nurse to give talks on any of the above subjects. Request the assistance of a Public Health Nurse.

Rural Education

The need of more continuous and better education in rural districts is one of the most important factors that militates against a prosperous and happy rural life. The organized farm women are in a position to make valuable contributions toward the solution of this problem, and each local can do much in the improvement of local conditions which will tend to overcome the short term, the poorly qualified and transient teacher, the unsanitary and unattractive features of the rural school.

Here are some of the ways you can help:

Co-operate with the teacher to improve your school. Starting a school garden. Hot noon school lunch. Organized play, such as basketball, baseball, a school field day. A school fair to include a group of school districts; etc.

Take part in all school and municipal elections, helping to select the most competent people to your school board and council, and making provision for at least one woman on the former.

Secure lantern slides for educational purposes.

Every local should have its school committee who will look after the interests of the school, its teacher and the children.

Discuss such subjects as:

Does the Course of Studies Meet the Needs of Rural Children?

The School as a Community Centre.

Advantages of the Teacher's Residence.

How Can We Improve Our Rural School?

Beautifying the School and Grounds.

Education Through Play.

Education for Morality.

Consolidated Schools.

Household Economics in the Rural School.

Citizenship.

"It is through legislation that we govern the welfare of the community." And now that women have the priceless privilege of "shaping their country's history a little nearer to the hearts' desire," it is our duty to acquire a general knowledge of current events, especially of matters in which our franchise may be called upon to play a part. Half of the responsibility for the government is already ours.

Let one of the members be chosen for each meeting to prepare a ten-minute talk on the chief points of interest in the world news of the weeks preceding the meeting.

Watch the proceedings of the legislature, both provincial and federal. Take an active interest in all legislation passed by them, especially such as concerns the Dower Act, Mothers' Allowances, Health, Education, and other matters which come within the scope of our work. Stand for a high moral standard in the member you send to represent you in the legislature.

Give your support to the political action that we as an organization have undertaken. Study "The Farmers' Platform," or, as it is now called, "The New National Policy," and debate its planks with a view to getting an understanding and appreciation of those democratic principles of government for which we stand. The policy of this platform means just as much to the farm women as it does to the farmer. It is not a narrow, class-interest policy, but a broad "National Policy" for the benefit of all the people.

Include in your program such subjects as:

- A New National Policy for Canada.
- The Tariff vs. Direct Taxation.
- The Decline of the Party System.
- Proportional Representation.
- The Relative Aims of Labor and the Farmer.
- Woman's Enfranchisement.
- Legal Status of Women in Alberta.
- The Duties of Citizenship.
- Current Events.
- Our Duty to the Foreign Immigrant.

Service to Home and Community

Running like a thread through all phases of our work is the word, "Service." We serve by pledging ourselves as members of a great Organization to set the highest standard of home life and ideals, through example and through the study of subjects pertaining to home-making such as Home Economics, Home Building, Labor Saving and Efficiency

in the Home, Mothercraft, etc. Have discussions on how to eliminate or simplify work by good planning, so that the home-maker is able to give some time each day to mental development and the art of making the farm home life so attractive that the drift to the towns and cities of our best and mentally brightest farm boys and girls will be stayed, because they will have been made to realize that the country gives them equally full opportunities for the use of their intellectual and aesthetic capabilities. The home-maker and the club must unite to bring art, music and play to the farm.

Service to the Community, and the Nation is given when we direct our efforts towards improvement of rural life as outlined above. The community is the unit of the national life, we are therefore building a strong and virulent Canada when we maintain a high standard in the community. We can touch in a very direct manner also the life of our country, through making use of and accepting the responsibilities of the franchise.

We are serving the best interests of the home when we concern ourselves with the public welfare, for "There is nothing outside the home but affects the home."

SAMPLE PROGRAMMES

- Jan. 3—Entertainment for Young Girls and Boys.
- Jan. 17—Discussion on Questions of Public Interest.
- Feb. 7—Joint Meeting with U.F.A. Report of Delegates.
- Feb. 21—Co-operation of Parents and Teachers.
- Mar. 6—Labor Saving Devices in the Home.
- Mar. 20—Balanced Rations and Food Values.
- Apr. 3—Is It Everybody's Duty to Vote?
- Apr. 17—Training the Young in Laws of Sex.
- May 1—Beautifying the School Grounds.

May 15—Training for Home-makers.

June 5—Discussion on Political Action. Joint Meeting with U.F.A.

June 19—A Practical Religion, Setting a High Moral Standard in Our Relationship With Our Fellow Men.

July 3—Planning for Chautauqua Visitors.

July 17—What Benefits Do We Derive From the U.F.W.A.? Invitation to Neighboring Local.

Aug. 7—Picnic with Juniors.

Aug. 21—Woman's Place in Politics.

Sept. 4—Training for Citizenship.

Sept. 18—What Do We Owe the Community?

Oct. 2—Favorite Recipes.

Oct. 16—A Woman Should Have the Same Privileges as Her Husband.

Nov. 6—Resolutions.

Nov. 20—Cooking Sale.

Dec. 4—Election of Officers.

Dec. 18—Report for Year. Joint Meeting with U.F.A.

January—Consideration of Resolutions for Annual Convention.

February—Report of Delegates.

March—Poultry Lecture.

April—The Rural School Question.

May—Public Health.

June—Young People's Work.

July—Woman's Status in Alberta Laws.

August—Making Our Organization Most Effective.

September—Works of Canadian Authors.

October—Consideration of Fall Activities.

November—Social Evening. Debate on Tariff.

December—Election of Officers.

(Different leaders will give a ten minute talk on the planks of the Farmers' Platform at each meeting.)

PROGRAMME SUGGESTIONS

1. Let each member bring suggestion for topics which she would like discussed or studied, these to be considered by the programme committee when arranging the programme.

2. Keep an open question drawer.

3. Study some subject of interest to the organized farm people, such as The Farmers' Platform, Laws Relating Particularly to Women, Alberta Health Legislation, Rural Education.

4. Have a paper or round table talk on some household or community work, having it correspond with the season of the year, for example, in spring discuss gardening and tree planting, improvement of the appearance of the district, poultry raising, etc.; in summer, canning fruit and vegetables, picnics, community bakeries and laundries, etc.; in autumn, labor saving devices for the home, dress-making, domestic help, etc.; and in winter, the library, bazaars, winter amusements, etc.

5. Vary the programme with music, readings, selections by the young people, debates, amateur plays, etc.

6. To interest members in the Farmers' Platform, see that each one receives a copy. Keep before the members the object of studying it, which is to understand the economic condition of our country with a view to being able to vote intelligently. Have a debate requiring the study of a plank in the Platform, such as "Protection vs. Free Trade."

7. Try to have every member contribute something to the meeting, if only a very brief talk on a familiar subject such as "A Well Balanced Menu for a School Lunch," "The Best Food for Chicks," "A New Recipe for a Salad."

8. Sing, "Organize, Oh Organize" at the meetings. Some of your members may be "poetically

inclined." Suggest that they make up a song or two appropriate for the Local.

9. Make use of The Grain Growers' Guide in the following ways:

(1) Have each member clip articles on some subject of particular interest to the Local, such as those already mentioned. This will keep the members in touch with current questions, and will assist busy members when preparing papers.

(2) Choose an interesting article in The Guide to be read and discussed at your meeting. Assign a paragraph to each member in turn to read aloud.

10. Have a joint meeting once in a while, and finish up with a social evening. Such a meeting may be held quarterly.

ADDITIONAL TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

Home and Farm

Labor Saving Devices in the Home.

Co-operative (Community) Helps.

Household Decoration.

Home Ideals.

Value of College Training in Housekeeping and Home-making.

System in the Business of Keeping House.

Child Training in the Home.

Clothing the Child.

Food Values.

Balanced Rations in Warm Weather.

The Fireless Cooker.

Round Table Talk on House Cleaning.

Hints on Gardening and Poultry.

Insect Pests in House and Garden.

Early Culture of Flowers (Annuals and Perennials).

Home Canning of Fruits, Vegetables and Meats.

Uses of the Various Cuts of Meat.
Suggestions on Curing Meats.
Storing Winter Vegetables.
Adornment of the Christmas Table.
Simple Gifts for Christmas.

The Community

How to Form a Library.
Wholesome Recreation for Boys and Girls.
Amusements for Young People during Winter Evenings.
Securing a Rest Room in the Town.
Socialization of Rural Communities.
Should the Boy and Girl on the Farm Have an Allowance?

Co-operation

Co-operative Buying and Selling.
The Advantage of Forming an Egg Circle.
Co-operation at Home and Abroad.

MEANS USED BY LOCALS TO OBTAIN FUNDS

1. Prepare a cook book for sale.
2. Autograph quilt.
3. Sales of home cooking.
4. Ten cent teas.
5. Give each member a sum of money to invest in whatever she thinks will bring the best returns, the profits to go to the Local.
6. Local theatricals.
7. Bazaars.
8. Dances.
9. Canvass for new subscriptions for The Guide and keep the proportion of the subscription that The Guide allows in the Local.

SUGGESTIONS FOR OBTAINING MEMBERS

1. Make a personal canvass of the women in the district.
2. Send the women in the district special invitations to visit your meetings.
3. Prepare interesting programmes. Invite speakers from neighboring Locals.
4. Have a rally of U.F.A. and U.F.W.A. Locals.
5. Serve light lunches or refreshments at meetings.
6. Put on a membership drive periodically.

SUGGESTIONS FOR INTERESTING JUNIOR MEMBERS

1. Put on a membership drive for Junior members, choose sides, the losing side to supply a concert or other form of entertainment for the winners. The Local might offer a prize to the person securing the highest number of Junior members.
2. Let the young people have a share of the programme, furnishing their talent after school hours or on Saturdays—readings, recitations, songs, debates, etc.
3. Choose committee amongst Junior members to co-operate with same committees amongst Senior members, such as school, library, social, etc. Let one of the Junior members act as assistant secretary or press reporter.
4. School fairs.
5. Senior Locals might offer prizes for the best essay on "Why Every Member of the Family Should Be a Member of the U.F.A.", etc.
6. Have definite work for the young people to do, such as raise funds for a library or to supply games for the school, sew sheets and pillow cases

for children's ward in a hospital, make scrap books, scribbler size, for children's hospitals, correspond with pupils in New Canadian Schools, design and write programmes for the U.F.A. and U.F.W.A.

7. Co-operate with teachers and parents in improving the rural school.

8. Co-operate with teacher so pupils may be taught how to conduct meetings according to parliamentary procedure at Friday afternoon school concerts, etc.

9. Hold field days, picnics and other social times for the Juniors.

10. Have community singing and let the young people take part.

11. Hold Graduation Day for graduates of Public School to encourage the completion of the public school course.

12. Help the Juniors to organize team games, such as Basketball, Baseball, Football and Hockey.

13. Arrange to have competitions with adjoining districts.

14. Help the young people organize a Junior Local which shall be educational and social, at the same time correlating the economic and vocational aspects.

